

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please substitute the following **claims 7 and 14** for the pending claims 7 and 14:

1. (Three times amended) A system for reducing congestion in an Operations and Maintenance Center (OMC), the system comprising a network element that comprises:

a filter receiving event notifications from processes within the network element and providing a plurality of filtered event notifications, wherein each event notification of the plurality of event notifications notifies of a different event;

an event counter module coupled to the filter for receiving the plurality of filtered event notifications from the filter and counting a quantity of filtered event notifications to produce event counter information; and

a performance measurement module coupled to the event counter module for receiving the event counter information from the event counter module and sending alarms to the OMC.

7. (Three times amended) A method for reducing the number of event notifications sent to an Operations and Maintenance Center (OMC) by a network element serviced by the OMC, the method comprising the steps of:

filtering event notifications to provide a plurality of filtered event notifications, wherein each event notification of the plurality of event notifications notifies of a different event;

counting the plurality of filtered event notifications to generate event count information from the filtered event notifications; and

conveying an alarm to the OMC if the event count information exceeds a threshold.

14. (Three times amended) An apparatus for reducing the number of event notifications sent to an Operations and Maintenance Center (OMC) by a network element serviced by the OMC comprising:

means for filtering to provide a plurality of filtered event notifications, wherein each event notification of the plurality of event notifications notifies of a different event;